

A PRESENTATION ON NURSES' EMPOWERMENT AND POLICY –MAKING

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What is empowerment: - According to the Oxford advanced learner's dictionary to empower is to give somebody more control over their own life or the situation they are in.

Def. of Power: - The ability to control people or things. According to Chandler 1992, the difference between power and empowerment is that empowerment enables one to act where as power connotes having control, influence or domination. Nurses who are empowered are highly motivated and are able to motivate and empower others by sharing the sources of power Lanchinger & Haverns, 1996.

Chamberlin (2009) indicated that empowerment was complex, multi dimensional concept and that it described a process rather than an event. Empowerment is on a continuum, because the environments, depending on the structure of empowerment are present in the work setting.

Kanter (1993) identified the four structural conditions that are key contributors to empowerment.

- ✚ Having opportunity for advancement or opportunity to be involved in activities beyond one's job description.
- ✚ Access to information about all facets of the organization
- ✚ Access to support for one's job responsibilities and decision making.
- ✚ Access to resources as needed by the employee.

Having opportunity for advancement or opportunity to be involved in Activities beyond one's job

description: The advent of advanced practice nursing, and the increase in graduate educational opportunities for nurses, has contributed to the change in the face of nursing. This has therefore contributed in more autonomy in nursing practice because nurses see themselves as critical to the

outcome of patients' care; view themselves as professional with critical thinking and decision making skills.

Nurses need to be encouraged to attain the highest education to maintain the autonomy.

Access to information about all facts of the organization: Decision making should not happen in a vacuum.

Decisions are best made when nurses have sufficient information to various weigh the possible consequences of

various choices. Out of paternalism, many nurses are restricted from information of or from the organization.

Lacking adequate information render the nurse make impulsive or wrong choices that do not augur well to nursing practice. However, recent research suggests that the opportunity to exercise personal discretion/choice (and complete meaningful work) is an important element contributing to employee engagement and well being.

Access to support for one's job responsibilities and decision making: Empowerment to nurses in the work place provides them with opportunities to make their own decision with regards to their practice. Now-a-days more and more bosses and managers are practicing the concept of empowerment among their subordinates to provide them with better opportunities.

Access to resources as needed by the nurses: Resources in terms of human, material and money are inadequate in the developing countries. Although there is inadequacy of all these resources and especially money and human, nurses still migrate to the developed world to seek greener pastures. This has led to the aggravation of the already inadequate nurses in the developing countries.

Availability of material resources to nurses empower them to practice effectively towards giving quality care to patients. Educational resources in the form of in-service training, seminars and workshops given to nurses enable them to be empowered through the acquisition knowledge. This contributes to the acquisition of confidence and assertiveness that help them to be involved in policy making.

The Process of Empowerment: This is the process which enables one to gain power, authority and influence over others, institutions or society. Empowerment is probably the totality of the following or similar capabilities.

- Having decision-making power of one's own.
- Having access to information and resources for making proper decision.
- Having a range of options from which you can make choices (not just yes/no, either /or.)
- Ability to exercise assertiveness in collective decision making.
- Having positive thinking on the ability to make change.
- Ability to learn skills for improving one's personal or group power.
- Ability to change others perceptions by democratic means.
- Involving in the growth process and changes that is never ending and self initiated.

- Increasing one's positive self – image and overcoming stigma
- Increasing one's ability to discreet thinking to sort out right and wrong.

Personal Empowerment: Conger and Kanungo (1980) viewed empowerment as a motivational construct, while maintaining that it is still a personal attribute. They saw empowerment as enabling which implies motivating through enhancing personal efficacy. Personal empowerment is more of psychological empowerment. Spreitzer (1995), asserted that the process of psychological empowerment is a motivational construct which manifests as a set of four cognitions

that are shaped by work environment. The four cognitions are:- meaning, competence, self-determination and impact.

1. Laschinger, Finegan & Shamian (2001), indicated that meaning occurs when there is congruence between a nurse's beliefs, values and behaviours and job requirement.
2. Competence refers to confidence in one's abilities to perform a job and it is also known as self efficacy.
3. Self-determination or autonomy refers to the feeling of control that is exerted over one's work.
4. Impact is seen as a sense of being able to influence important organizational outcomes.

What is a Policy: - a statement of plans and actions of an establishment. It also means principles and ideas which organizations consider reasonable by which the organization is run. Policy making is therefore the setting of ideas that are used as a basis for making decisions, especially in politics, economics or business etc.

What are some of the policies made by the nurse? The policy made by the nurse is the Code of Professional Conduct and Etiquette which is made by the Nurses and Midwives Council. The other policies that guide the nursing profession are made by the employer. Some of these are what qualifies a person to be a nurse and the category of nursing, policies on posting, policies on appointment, policies on counseling, policies on promotion etc are policies made by the employer, the ministry of health. The question is do nurses make the attempt to make policies of their own but is guided by the employers' policies? It is high time the nurses made their own policies in addition to the policies spelt out for them by the employer.

An important area the nurse has to make policy is the in-service training for nurses. Elaborate on this point

Nursing Leadership, Organization and Policy: Nurses make up the largest healthcare provider group in the healthcare system. Staffing and other workplace issues remain critically important to this group. As well, a recent nursing consultation identified the need for further work on strategies that address generational differences, such as recruitment and retention issues related to work-life balance expectations; full-time employment opportunities; and specific education and mentoring needs that support the transition of new nurses into a complex work environment. There is also increasing evidence that nursing care has a large impact on quality of care and patient safety. Thus there is significant overlap between this theme and two of the other strategic themes: management of the healthcare workplace and managing for quality and safety.

Proposals responding to these other themes can be within the scope of the nursing theme as long as they have a nursing health services focus.

Examples of issues that proposals could address include:

- **nursing leadership:** identifying strategies and models for involving nurses in governance and decision-making; finding ways to strategically support new nurses in leadership development and mentoring; and determining the role of nurses and nursing leadership in implementing quality improvement in health systems;
- **organization and workplace changes:** identifying models or strategies for effective inter-professional teamwork; determining optimal mix of healthcare providers, including the roles of regulated/unregulated workers and maximizing scopes of practice; measuring workload, developing valid workload measurement tools and strategies to reduce nursing workloads; identifying the optimal proportion of full-time versus part-time staff in various settings; and implementing recruitment and retention strategies; and

- **other policy areas:** examining the effectiveness of nursing care delivery models, from prevention to chronic disease management across the lifespan; increasing cost-effectiveness research; and evaluating the impact of funding formulas on nursing care, practice, and outcomes, both in the short and long terms and in all settings.

I'm still searching for literature on the following:-

- ❖ Nurses' Empowerment and Policy-making in Ghana
- ❖ Do nurses in Ghana make policies?
- ❖ What policies do they make?
- ❖ Recommendation
- ❖ The Chief Nursing Officer promised to send some documents to me.